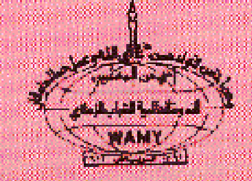
SOURCEWORKS OF ISLAMIC THOUGHT

THREE ESSAYS ON TAWḤĪD

by Shaykh
Muhammad ibn 'Abd al Wahhāb

Translated by
Isma'il Rāji al Fārūqi



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IN THE NAME OF ALLAH
THE MERCIFUL THE COMPASSIONATE

INTRODUCTION

1. The Form of the Reformer's Argument

This book contains three little-known epistles by Muhammad ibn 'Abd al Wahhāb, written toward the end of his career. In them, the great reformer compressed all the essentials of his mature thought and presented it in succinct form for the instruction of the public. The addressee, in every case, is his pupil or follower who, having convinced himself of the truthfulness of the plea, is now being instructed in the art of convincing others. Both addressee-follower and contender are presumed Muslims, holding to the veracity of the Qur'ān as the reported word of God and to the authentic Hadīth as the normative and binding directive of the Prophet—*Ṣalla Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam*. The logical appeal is therefore in every case to internal coherence. Abhorring inconsistency and self-contradiction, the Islāmic mind has always sought to systematize its truth-claims and harmonize them together. Its driving inspiration has been the ideational equivalence and absolute convertibility of the unity of Allah (*al tawḥīd*) and the unity of truth (*waḥdat al Ḥaqq*). On this account it has aspired to keep itself free from ambiguity and imprecision, and has always sought to express itself in clear ideas and distinct terms. And it has succeeded!

Two essential features have contributed to its success. The first is Islām's demythologizing tendency. Its insistence on the absolute singularity and transcendence of the Godhead eliminated all possible fusion of the divine with the creaturely, and hence of any perception of the natural as supernatural or vice versa. "Con-fusion" of God, the Creator, with the creature is the very root and source of all immanence and all myth. That the creature is an "incarnation," a "representation," a hierophany of the Godhead, or its symbol in a way which endows the symbol with a vitality or being of its own—such is the assumption made by every claim compromising to the transcendence of God. Systematically and, one might say, furiously, Islām demolished all myths woven around God, asserting that we either recognize God immediately, and without anthropomorphisms or not at all. The anthropomorphic way of speaking about God remains but it has been in Islām denuded of its myth-forming and mythifying power. The divine attributes are hence taken to mean what they say, naturally and

immediately. There is no feeling or evoking of any need to raise the question. How is the attribute a predicate of its divine subject? Such need to transform the meaning of the term into a myth demanded by the question was abated. The second pertains to Islām's primary noetic carrier, namely the Arabic language, where eloquence means clarity, or the total conformance of what is said to what is beheld in consciousness. The lexicographic clarity of Arabic is responsible, in final analysis, for the Arabic nature of a revelation purporting to affirm the absolute disparity of Creator and creature, the total profanity of all creation and hence, of the naked reality of everything as it is. To everything, object, state or event, Arabic gives one word which fits *muqtadā al hāl* (the requirement of its actuality). It was the Word of God which fulfilled all the requirements of Arabic *bayān par excellence sublime*; and thereby set the norms of clarity and precision and froze them to eternity.

It is hence not surprising, but nonetheless wonderful, that the reformative mind in Islām has perceived its cause as a case of logical consistency or internal coherence. In its view, the Muslims who have strayed from the straight path have committed a logical error, that of violating the laws of internal coherence, inherent to the Islāmic system. That is why, for Muhammad ibn 'Abd al Wahhāb, as well as for all other Muslim reformers, reform is the correction of an understanding. But unlike other corrections of the understanding, Islāmic reform does not seek to supplant one idea supposedly false by another supposedly true. It does not mean change at all, but the repudiation of a proposition introduced in violation of other propositions held to be essential to Islām. That is why Islāmic reformers have presented their case as an appeal to propositional consistency. Muhammad ibn 'Abd al Wahhāb did so in exemplary fashion.

For the Islāmic mind, proposition are statements about reality, not mere emotive expressions of a sentient subject, or mental relations between passing phantasms. Although the Islāmic thinker has never thought of identifying mental with real objects and relations, the stream of consciousness with reality, he has persistently held that reality cannot be at contradiction with itself because it is God's work. God Whose omniscience, justice and wisdom preclude all ignorance, weakness, and arbitrariness, would not have created a self-contradictory world. Hence although the consistent system of propositions would still have to pass the test of correspondence with reality, no statement could claim to have passed that test which runs counter to the other statements integral to the system. Again, this is not to identify the rest of reality with mankind's cumulative wisdom; but it is to establish a necessary parallelism between the two levels of thought and reality, a parallelism consisting of an internal structure which man recognizes as coherence,

and which is based upon the identity, nay, singularity, of the source, whence the two levels—reality and knowledge—issue. That source is Allah, *subhānuhu wa ta'ālā.*

Muhammad ibn 'Abd al Wahhab's arguments in the following *Essays* move from proposition to proposition and end in a Qur'ānic verse. The Qur'ānic verse constitutes all the evidence (*al dalīl*) needed to settle the argument, since both author and reader, contender and respondent are supposedly Muslim. Clear exposition of logical relationship of the Qur'ānic verse to the contender's proposition, must result in the removal of the inconsistency, the error. This is only part of the meaning of *dalīl* (evidence) which is here carried by another modality of the Word of God or the *ḥadīth* of his Prophet—*sallā Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam*. The other part is the correspondence with truth which is here taken for granted since the Word of God is self-evidently the word of truth. That author and reader take it for granted does not mean exclusion of the criterion of correspondence. It only assumes that the question has been raised and satisfactorily answered, beyond all doubt. This is especially clear when Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al Wahhāb recourses to showing that contradiction of the Qur'ānic based reasoning leads to absurdity.

2. Its Content

The first Essay elaborates the three bases of Islām: Knowledge of God, of His religion and of His Prophet. God is Creator, whose existence is attested by His creation, by its orderliness and purposiveness. He is the Lord, Master and Judge. Since He alone is God, all *'ibādah* is due to Him, that is, all worship must be of Him, and all service and all endeavor must be for His sake. This is only the meaning of His axiological ultimacy. The second base, namely, knowledge of Allah's religion is understanding of the three progressively higher states of Islāmicity: *Islām* or submission to Allah's Lordship; *īmān* or personal conviction of the truth—claims of the religion; *ihsān* or fulfillment of the good that is required by God. The third base, knowledge of Allah's Prophet, is incumbent if *islām, īmān* and *ihsān* are to be implemented following the exemplary model or *sunnahs* of the Prophet.

The second Essay carries the reader deeper and further into Islāmic knowledge. It gives the four basic rules of *tawḥīd*, in the hope that observance of them would guarantee the declared most important commandment of Allah and the essence of the Islāmic religious call. Everything else is pardonable by Allah except *shirk* or violation of *tawḥid*, the association of other beings with Allah. The gravity of the risk demands absolute clarity and precise understanding of *tawḥīd* and

its opposite. Here, Islāmic meanings are put in the sharpest possible focus by noting and repudiating the slightest infringement of the unization principle.

The first rule is to know that there is more to *tawḥīd* than mere monotheism, or the acknowledgement of an arithmetical unity of God. The pre-Islāmic Arabs whom the Prophet had fought were all monotheists, but that did not help them because far more is required. The second is to know precisely wherein the pre-Islāmic Arabs failed the test of *tawḥīd.* They acknowledged Allah's existence, ultimacy, unity, creatorship as well as judgeship. But they invoked other beings to intercede with Him on their behalf. This was *shirk* (or association) in that they understood the divine power as open to influence by those beings to whom they prayed. The third rule is that there are numerous varieties of *shirk*, of which the pre-Islāmic Makkan which included such practices as hanging arms on a tree (Dhāt Anwāt) as token of thanksgiving to God for whom the tree was probably an epiphanic locus or medium, was only one. Another widespread case of confirmed *shirk* is trinitarian Christianity which apotheosized Jesus and invited men to address to his mother, Mary, their prayers of intercession. Finally, the fourth rule is that modern *shirk* is more sinister than that of the ancient Makkans. These, as the Qur'ān informed us about them, recoursed to their offensive crime only at time of adversity and misfortune, i.e., whenever they stood in peril and needed rescue; whereas the moderns do so at all times, even in safety. It is indeed a lesser offense to commit a crime when threatened with imminent death or peril, than to do so, deliberately, as it were on principle. The moderns invoke other beings for intercession without extenuating circumstances.

The third Essay expounds all the foregoing points dialectically teaching the reader how to argue with the contender of these truths. The author is here keen to equip his reader with knowledge with which to ward off temptation and correct mistakes, to the end of maintaining *tawḥīd* absolutely free of compromise. The great devotions of Islām, *ṣalāt*, *zakāt*, fasting and pilgrimage, would all be vain if the Muslim were to invoke a patron saint's intercession; or if he were so to deprecate himself as a sinner as to deem himself unworthy of soliciting the divine favor directly from Allah Himself. Even the Prophet Muḥammad—*ṣallā Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam*—who was appointed intercessor for mankind by divine commandment, cannot be prayed to for that favor. Not only the power to dispense grace but the power to ask for it on behalf of anyone else, belong exclusively to Allah. The Muslim may not therefore pray: "O Muḥammad, intercede with Allah on my behalf," but "O Allah, grant that Muḥammad may intercede on my behalf,"

Muhammad ibn 'Abd al Wahhab called *tawhid* "the head and crux of

all religion." He was certainly right. As far as Arabia and the early Muslim community are concerned, uncompromising *tawḥīd* was the breakthrough which released their energies for the fastest and greatest civilization-building movement in history. It distinguished them poignantly from Makkans, Jews, and Christians who compromised monotheism with obvious associationism, and it set them off from those early Muslims who, for one reason or another, did not rise to the hyperborean, vision of their peers. *Tawḥīd* is the vision of man rehabilitated in his world, confident in his power to achieve felicity by himself, usufructing the whole of a creation he knows to be utterly profane, designed and created by Allah for his benefit. It implies the tremendous responsibility of being Allah's vice-gerent on earth. As the author has so beautifully put it, *īmān*, the highest stage of Islāmic conviction, begins with that elemental disposition to realize the good on earth as would compel the *mu'min* (the person who has *īmān*) to remove the smallest obstruction or nuisance on any public highway. Here, the "public spirit" of the most conscientious *citoyen* assumes cosmic proportions, infinite depth. It must reach everywhere and make of its presence a goodness-making force dispensing its energy for neither worldly pay nor glory, but for the sake of Allah alone.

But this *tawḥīd* has its own brand of reward, and it is supreme. The adherent of it is above all human authoritarianism and hence absolutely free because his submission is to Allah alone—the Most Beneficient, the ultimate Source of all goodness; to Whom he has direct access without the mediation of priests, saints, other gods, idols, church or anything other than Allah. Such loyalty is the apex of creativity, for man is chained by countless threads of historical determinants, shackled by the crushing weights of tradition, custom, habit and social institutions, all of which fall to the ground with his declaration, *lā ilaha illā Allah!* There is no God but Allah! With *tawḥīd* man is free. He is a proud man, a hyperborean! His joys are those of a higher order of creatures than the general run of mankind. And yet he is no racist, particularist, or ethnocentrist, holding to no Jewish favoritism or election, no Augustinian Calvinistic predeterminism to salvation. On the Contrary, he is universalist, calling all men to rise to his vision, indeed reminding and urging them that that is exactly what is expected of them. He spares no energy to lead them thereto, and every man, woman and child on earth are his brothers and sisters, worthy of his teaching, assistance and cooperation. Every human is worthy of his best efforts and energies, as promising future members of his world-*ecumene*, the universal brotherhood under the law of God.

It is this freedom, this un-mediated access to the Source of all Goodness and its resultant creativity, this responsibility and its

ON THE TAWḤĪD

Three Essays

by
Muhammad ibn 'Abd al Wahhāb
died 1206 A.H.

Translated
by
Isma'il Rājī al Fārūqī

In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Beneficent

ESSAY I

THE FIRST PRINCIPLES AND THEIR PROOFS

Know—May Allah show you mercy!—that it is incumbent upon us to master four problems. The first concerns knowledge—*i.e.*, the knowledge of God, of His Prophet and of the religion of Islām—and our acquisition of it by evidence. The second concerns implementation of knowledge; the third, the call to, or spread of, knowledge; and the fourth, perseverence in all these tasks despite all hindrances. Evidence therefore is to be found in God's following words: "In the Name of Allah, the Merciful, the Beneficent. By the time! Man is indeed in peril, except those who have faith, do the righteous works, and counsel each other to uphold the truth and to stand firm in patience."[1] Al Shāfi'ī—May Allah show him mercy—commented on these verses: "Had God not revealed but this short *sūrah*, it would have been sufficient."

Al Bukhārī—May Allah show him mercy—said: "Knowledge precedes expression and action. This is confirmed in the divine verse "Know therefore that there is no God but Allah, and then repent your sin."[2] God has first required knowledge and then action. Know—May Allah show you mercy—that every Muslim man and woman must master the following three principles and act in accordance with them.

First is the principle that God created and provided for us. He did not forsake us; but sent to us a prophet. Whoever obeys him will enter Paradise, and whoever disobeys will enter Hell. Confirming this claim is the verse, "We sent you an apostle to be a witness of your deeds, as We had sent an apostle to Pharaoh. Pharaoh disobeyed the apostle's call. We inflicted upon him, therefore, a terrible punishment."[3]

The second principle is that God condemns *shirk, i.e.*, association of anyone else with Him, neither a close angel nor an appointed apostle. Evidence for this is the verse, "All houses of worship belong to Allah. Do not therefore invoke in your prayers anyone else but Him."[4]

The third principle is that whoever obeys the Prophet and proclaims the unity of Allah may not befriend those who disobey Allah and His Prophet, even if they should be his nearest relatives. This is confirmed by the divine verses: "You will find no people who, having believed in Allah and the Day of Judgment, would befriend those who disobey Allah and His Apostle, even if they be their own sons, brothers or next of kin. In their hearts, Allah has established faith and conviction and strengthened them with His own spirit. He will bring them into Paradise

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[1]Qur'an 103:1-3.
[2]Qur'an 47:19.
[3]Qur'an 73:15-16.
[4]Qur'an 72:18.

where rivers flow, to rest therein eternally. Surely, He is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him. It is they that constitute Allah's party. And Allah's party is always felicitous."[5]

Know—May Allah guide you to His obedience—that Hanifism, the religion of Ibrahīm, consists in worship of Allah alone, in addressing piety and devotion exclusively to Him. That is the commandment of Allah to all people. Indeed, He has created them for that very purpose. Allah said: "I have not created jinn and men but to worship Me."[6] "Worship Me" means "proclaim My unity." Unization of Allah, or singling Him out for worship, is in fact the greatest imperative of Allah. Conversely, His greatest prohibition is *shirk* or associationism, the worship of other beings with Allah. The proof of this is in the divine verse: "Worship Allah and associate naught with Him."[7]

If it is asked, What are the three principles man is obliged to know, the answer is first, knowledge by man of His Lord; second, knowledge of His religion; and third, knowledge of His Prophet—*Ṣallā Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam.*

Principle I

If it is asked, Who is your Lord? answer: My Lord is Allah, Who brought me and the whole world by His grace. He is the object, the sole object, of my worship. The proof of this is in the divine verse: "Praise be to Allah, Lord of the universe!"[8] Everything other than Allah is creation; and I am a creature, part of that creation.

If it is asked, How did you gain knowledge of your Lord? answer: By means of His signs, His creatures. For day and night, sun and moon are indeed signs of Him; the seven heavens above and the seven worlds below and all that they contain, His creatures. The evidence therefor is in the verse: "And of His signs are night and day, sun and moon. Do not therefore kneel before either; but do kneel before Allah, Who created them. He alone is worthy of your worship."[9] Another verse says: "Your Lord is Allah, Who created heaven and earth in six days, Who reigns on the throne, Who alternates the day and the night in quick succession,

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[5]Qur'an 58:22. This verse was revealed after the Battle of Badr, when the matter before the Prophet was the case of Abu 'Ubaydah ibn al Jarrah who killed his father on the battlefield. Islam had caused a separation between the two, and made of the son a great and enthusiastic follower of the Prophet, and of the father an inveterate enemy. It was in consciousness of this that 'Umar ibn al Khattab said of Abu 'Ubaydah: "Had he been alive, I would have appointed him my successor." Surely, a person such as Abu 'Ubaydah must have been confirmed in his faith, strengthened in his devotion and resolve by Allah Himself.

[6]Qur'an 51:56

[7]Qur'an 4:36.

[8]Qur'an 1:1.

[9]Qur'an 41:37.

Who orders the sun, the moon and the stars into their courses. To Him belongs creation and command. Blessed be He, Lord of the universe."[10]

The Lord is alone worthy of worship. Consider the verse: "O men, worship your Lord Who created you and those before you. Thus may you attain piety. It is He Who made the earth subservient to you, Who raised the sky like a dome, Who brought down the rain and produced the fruit for your sustenance. Do not permit yourselves to set up any associates for Him."[11] Ibn Kathir—May Allah show him mercy—said: "Only the Creator of these things is worthy of worship."

All forms of worship prescribed by Allah, such as submission (*islām*), conviction (*iman*), beneficence (*ihsān*), as well as prayer (*du'ā'*), reverential fear (*khawf*), hope, trust, loving obedience (*raghbah*), fearing disobedience (*rahbah*), awe (*khushū'*), wonder, reliance, prayer for rescue and assistance, taking refuge, sacrifice, taking vows—these and other forms of worship commanded by Allah are to be addressed exclusively to Him. Evidence therefor is in the verse: "All houses of worship belong to Allah. Do not therefore invoke in your prayers anyone else but Him."[12] Whoever addresses his prayers to any other beside Allah is an associationist devoid of faith. Evidence therefore is Allah's own assertion: "Whoever invokes another god with Allah has invoked a false god. His punishment is with his Lord. Allah will not permit the unbelievers to prosper."[13] In the *ḥadīth*, it is reported that "Invocation is the marrow of worship."[14]

The evidence that all prayer must be addressed to Allah is the verse: "Your Lord commanded, 'Invoke Me and I shall respond to you. Those who are too proud to worship Me shall enter hellfire in humiliation.'"[15] The evidence that reverential fear must be to Allah alone is in the verse: "Do not fear them [*i.e.*, the other gods] but fear Me. That is the index of your faith."[16] Evidence that hope must be in Allah alone is the verse: "Whoever hopes for the day when he would meet his Lord, let him do the good deed and let him associate naught with Allah."[17] Evidence that trust must be in Allah alone is in the verses: "Place your trust in Allah alone if you are faithful,"[18] and "Whoever trusts Allah has trusted well and sufficiently."[19]

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[10]Qur'an 7:54.
[11]Qur'an 2:21-22.
[12]Qur'an 72:18.
[13]Qur'an 23:117.
[14]Reported by al Tirmidhi from Anas ibn Malik.
[15]Qur'an 40:60.
[16]Qur'an 3:175.
[17]Qur'an 18:110.
[18]Qur'an 5:23.
[19]Qur'an 65:3.

The evidence that awe, loving obedience and fearing disobedience should be to Allah exclusively can be found in the divine verse: "They [the blessed faithful] race with one another for the good deeds. They invoke Allah in loving obedience, always fearing to disobey Him, and are constant in their reverence for Him."[20] Evidence that Allah alone should be object of man's wonder is in the verse: "Do not fear them [the People of the Book, viz., Jews and Christians] but fear Me. I will then complete My favor unto you and you will then be rightly guided."[21] Evidence that recourse should be to Allah alone is in the verse: "Recourse to Allah and submit to Him, before punishment strikes you. There is no other help from any source."[22] Evidence that prayer for assistance should be directed to Allah alone is in the verse: "It is You we worship, Your assistance we pray for."[23] In the *ḥadīth* it is reported: "If you need any assistance, ask it of Allah."[24] The evidence for seeking refuge only in Allah is in the verse: "Pray: I seek refuge in the Lord of mankind, the King of mankind, the God of mankind."[25] The evidence that rescue may be sought only of Allah is in the verse: "Remember when you asked Allah to rescue you and He responded to your appeal and sent a thousand angels to consolidate your ranks?"[26] Finally, evidence that sacrifices and vows are to be made to Allah alone is in the verses: "Say: My worship, my service, my life and my death—all are to Allah, Lord of the universe, Who has no associates. Thus I am commanded; thus I am the first to submit to Him;"[27] and "They [the righteous] fulfill their vows to Allah, fearing the Day of Judgment, the punishment of which can spread far and wide."[28] In the *ḥadīth* it is reported: "Allah condemns whoever scarifices to any god beside Allah."[29]

Principle II

Whereas the first principle is conviction by proper evidence that Allah is Lord and Master, the second principle is knowledge of the religion of Islām, also by proper evidence, submission to Allah by recognition of His unity, avoidance of *shirk* or associationism and its adherents, and self-determination by Him through obedience. The religion of Islam has three stages: submission (*islām*), certitude or

[20]Qur'an 21:90.
[21]Qur'an 2:150.
[22]Qur'an 39:54.
[23]Qur'an 1:5.
[24]Related by al Tirmidhi.
[25]Qur'an 114:1-3.
[26]Qur'an 8:9.
[27]Qur'an 6:162-163.
[28]Qur'an 76:7.
[29]Reported by Muslim.

conviction (*īmān*) and beneficence (*iḥsān*). Every stage has its own constituent pillars. Submission (*islām*) has five: To witness that there is no God but Allah and that Muhammad is the Prophet of Allah; to hold *ṣalāt*; to give *zakāt*; to fast Ramaḍān, and to perform pilgrimage to the sacred house of Allah.

The First Stage

Evidence for the witnessing is in the verse: "Allah witnesses that there is no God but Him. So do the angels and the men of knowledge. Allah upholds justice. There is no God but Him. He is the Mighty, the Wise."[30] The meaning is clear: No God is entitled to worship except Allah alone. The negation of the statement is total and absolute except for Allah Whom it explicitly excludes from the negation, and to Whom alone, therefore, worship belongs. None may share this worship with Him, just as none shares His power and rule. Another verse further clarifying this meaning is: "Consider Ibrahīm who told his father and people: 'I do indeed dissociate myself from your worship of other gods. Henceforth, I will worship only Allah, Who created me, and Who guides me.' Ibrahīm taught this confession of faith in Allah to those who stayed behind as a reminder, in the hope that they would repent."[31] Allah also said, "Say: 'O People of the Book! Come now to a fair principle common to both of us, that we worship none but Allah, that we associate none with Him, that we shall not take one another as lords beside Allah.' But if they turn away from this call, then say: 'Bear witness that we, for our part, are Muslims.' "[32]

Evidence for the witness that Muḥammad is the Prophet of Allah is the verse: "A prophet has come to you from among your own people, a prophet who is grieved by your aberration, concerned for your salvation, and to those of you who have faith, most kind and merciful."[33] To witness that Muḥammad is the Prophet of Allah is to obey him in what he commanded, to believe him in what he conveyed, to avoid that which he forbade and prohibited, to serve Allah only in the ways he has prescribed. Evidence for worship (*ṣalāt*) and wealth-sharing (*zakāt*) is in the following verse, which clarifies the meaning of *tawḥīd* (unization of Allah) as well: "Men were not commanded to worship aught but Allah. They were ordered to keep themselves true to Him; to devote, as the Ḥanīfs did, all religious service to Him, to hold the *ṣalāt* and to pay the *zakāt*. That is the religion of the righteous."[34] Evidence for fasting is in the verse: "O men of faith! It is commanded unto you to

[30]Qur'an 3:18.
[31]Qur'an 43:26-28.
[32]Qur'an 3:64.
[33]Qur'an 9:128.
[34]Qur'an 98:5.

fast, as it has been commanded to your predecessors,that you may achieve piety."[35] Finally, evidence for pilgrimage is in the verse: "Men owe it to Allah to perform pilgrimage to the House of Allah. This duty is incumbent upon all those who are able to undertake it. If some men turn away from this commandment, know that Allah stands in no need of the world."[36]

The Second Stage

The second stage is that of *imun* (certitude, conviction). It consists of numerous elements. Highest among them is to witness that there is no God but Allah, and the lowest is to remove the least obstacle from the open highway. Even the sense of shyness is part of *īmān*.[37] Principal among the constitutive elements of *īmān* are the following: To believe in Allah, in His angels, His Books, His prophets, in the Day of Judgment, in divine *qadar* (providence or predetermination) whether for good or ill. Evidence therefor is in the divine statement: "Righteousness is not to turn your faces in worship whether to the East, or to the West, but to believe in Allah, in the Day of Judgment, in the angels, in the revelation and in the prophets, to spend of your wealth, for the sake of Allah, to benefit your kin, the orphans and the deprived, the wayfarer, the poor who beg, to ransom the captive, to uphold the *ṣalāt* and pay the *zakāt*, to fulfill your contracts and promises, to bear with firmness and patience all pain and adversity. Such are the men of faith, the pious."[38] Evidence for divine *qadar* is in the verse: "Everything We have created, We give it its measure."[39]

The Third Stage

The third stage is beneficence (*iḥsān*). It has one constitutive element, namely, "to serve Allah as if you see Him constantly. For, He sees you constantly even though you may not see Him."[40] The evidence therefor is found in the verses: "Allah is certainly with the pious and beneficent;"[41] "Trust in Allah, the Almighty and Wise, Who watches over you wherever you go, Who sees you within the ranks of worshippers in prostration. He it is Who hears and knows all things;"[42] and "Every thought you entertain, every word of the Qur'ān you recite, and every act you do is known and beheld by Allah just as you enter into it. Nothing is hidden from your Lord, not even if it were no more than

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[35]Qur'an 2:183.
[36]Qur'an 3:97.
[37]Reported by Muslim and Bukhari.
[38]Qur'an 2:177.
[39]Qur'an 54:49.
[40]This is part of a *ḥadith* reported by Muslim and al Bukhari.
[41]Qur'an 16:128.
[42]Qur'an 26:217-220.

an atom's weight, whether on earth or in heaven. All things indeed are clearly recorded in Allah's record."[43]

The *sunnah* furnishes corroborating evidence for *iḥsān*, as, for example, in the report of 'Umar ibn al Khaṭṭāb—May Allah bless him—which refers to Angel Jibrīl (Gabriel). 'Umar said: "As we sat in the Prophet's house, a man suddenly appeared in the room. His clothes were spotlessly white, his hair pitch black; no trace of having traveled was visible on him, and none of us could recognize him. He sat face to face with the Prophet—*Ṣallā Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam*—their knees almost touching. He placed his hands on the Prophet's legs and asked: 'O Muhammad! Tell me, What is Islām?' Muḥammad answered: 'Islām is to witness that there is no God but Allah and that Muḥammad is the Prophet of Allah; to hold the *ṣalāt*; to give the *zakāt*; to fast the month of Ramaḍān; to perform pilgrimage if at all possible.' The man said: 'You said the truth.' We were amazed how he posed the question and approved of the Prophet's answer. He asked the Prophet again: 'What is *īmān*?' and heard the reply: '*Īmān* is to believe in Allah, in His angels, His Books, His prophets, the Day of Judgment, His *qadar* for good or ill.' Again he asked: 'What is *iḥsān*?' The Prophet replied: '*Iḥsān* is to serve Allah as if you see Him constantly. For He sees you constantly even though you may not see him.' To the question, 'Tell me now concerning the Hour' [*i.e.*, the Last Day], the Prophet answered: 'Of this subject, the questioned has no more knowledge than the questioner.' The man asked: 'What are its signs?' The Prophet answered: 'That the female slave give birth to her mistress;[44] that the destitute barefooted, naked goatherds vie with one another as to who will erect the tallest building.' A long, silent interval passed before the Prophet asked me: 'O 'Umar! Do you know who this enquirer was?' I answered: 'Allah and His Prophet know best.' The Prophet said: 'That was Angel Jibrīl. He dropped in to ask these questions in front of you that he may teach you your religion.' "

Principle III

The third principle is knowledge that Muḥammad—*Ṣallā Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam*—is your Prophet.

Muḥammad was the son of 'Abdullah ibn 'Abd al Muṭṭalib ibn Hāshim. Hāshim was a Quraysh tribesman, and Quraysh was an Arab tribe. The Arabs are the descendants of Isma'īl, son of Ibrahīm al Khalīl

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[43]Qur'an 10:61.

[44]That is, that things would no more be what they are normally. Being the end of history, of space-time as the world has known it, the Last Hour or Day of Judgment can be defined as the day on which the normal order of the world, whether natural or social, would be destroyed. Hence, the Prophet's answer.

(the friend of Allah)—upon him and our Prophet Allah's blessing and peace! Muḥammad lived for 63 years, 40 before his prophethood, and 23 thereafter. He was made a prophet when Allah revealed to him the Qur'ānic verse: "Recite. . ."[45] and commissioned him as an apostle of Allah through the revelation of the verse: "O Muhammad, wrapped in your mantle, rise and warn. Your Lord glorify; your raiment purify; all evil shun; give not with an eye for greater gain; and unto your Lord be patient!"[46] "Rise and warn" means that Muḥammad was commanded to warn against *shirk* (associationism), to call for *tawḥīd* (unization of Allah). "Your Lord glorify" means to render homage by proclaiming His absolute unity. "Your raiment purify" means to purge all action clean of *shirk*. "Evil shun" means to do away with idols and remove oneself from nearness to those who follow them.

For ten years, the Prophet called men to *tawḥīd* (unization of Allah), after which he was raised to heaven where the five *ṣalawāt* (pl. of ṣalāt or worship ritual) were instituted. He performed the *salat* in Makkah for three years, after which he was commanded to emigrate to Madīnah. *Al Hijrah* (the emigration) means self-removal from the land of *shirk* to the land of Islām. *Al Hijrah* is a duty eternally imposed by Allah on all Muslims to remove themselves from the land of *shirk* to the land of Islam. Evidence for this imposition is in the verse: "Those who upon death are met by the angels with the question, 'What has become of you?' and answer, 'On earth, we were weak and could not help ourselves,' will be told: 'Was not the earth large enough for you to find another spot to which to emigrate,' [and thus help yourselves]? Those will be assigned hell for a shelter and doom for a lot, except of course those men, women and children who were truly incapable, utterly bereft of means. These may receive forgiveness from Allah. Allah is ever-forgiving, ever-merciful."[47] God also said: "O My servants who believe in Me! My earth is wide. Me alone, therefore, must you serve."[48] Al Baghawī—May Allah show him mercy—said: "The context in which this verse was revealed is related to those Muslims who remained in Makkah and failed to emigrate. Allah called them to do so for the sake of their faith. The evidence that emigration from the land of *shirk* is a normative *sunnah* is the Prophet's saying: "Emigration will not stop unless repentence stops; repentence will not stop unless the sun rises from the West."[49]

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[45]Qur'an 96:1. This and the following three verses of the Qur'an were the first revealed to the Prophet.
[46]Qur'an 74:1-7.
[47]Qur'an 4:97-99.
[48]Qur'an 29:56.
[49]Another indication *ad absurdum* of the Day of Judgment reported by al Manawi in quotation from ibn 'Asakir and Ahmad ibn Hanbal.

After the Prophet settled down in Madinah, he was commanded to institute the remaining laws of Islām, such as *zakāt*, fasting, pilgrimage, *adhān* (call to *ṣalāt*), *jihād* (holy war), enjoinment of the good and prohibition of evil. He spent the next ten years of his life in establishing and teaching the faith, and died—*Ṣallā Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam*—after having secured this religion and its institutions. There is no good to which he did not guide us, no evil against which he did not warn us. The good to which he guided his *ummah* is *tawḥīd* and all that is beloved and approved by Allah; the evil against which he warned is *shirk* and all that is condemned by Allah and hateful to Him.

Muhammad was the Prophet sent by Allah unto all mankind. It is Allah Who commanded obedience to him from the two principals, mankind and Jinn. Evidence of the universality of his mission is in the verse: "Say: 'O Men, I am the apostle of Allah to all of you."[50] In his prophethood, Allah completed the religion, as the verse indicates: "Today I have completed for you your religion, granted you My blessing, and established Islām for you as the religion."[51] Evidence for the Prophet's subjection to death is in the verse: "You [Muḥammad] are indeed mortal; and so are they. Both you and they will be resurrected and will then contend before Allah."[52] All men will die and be resurrected, as the verses have indicated: "From the earth We have created you; unto the earth We shall return you; and from the earth will We once more send you forth";[54] and "Allah has grown you out of the earth; He returns you therein and will cause you to emerge again."[55]

Upon resurrection, mankind will be judged each according to his deeds. The evidence is in the verse, "Unto Allah belongs all that is in heaven and earth. He will mete punishment to those who did wrong, and reward those who acted righteously."[56] Whoever denies the resurrection is an unbeliever, as the verse indicates: "Those who are committed to unbelief claim that they will not be resurrected. To them, say, O Muḥammad, 'But you will, indeed! You will be resurrected and you will be presented with your own deeds. For Allah, that is indeed easy!' "[57] Allah has sent all the prophets to reassure as well as to warn, as the verse indicates, "Allah has sent His messengers with tidings of reward and warnings of punishment, that justice may be done, that

[50]Qur'an 7:158.
[51]Qur'an 5:3.
[52]Qur'an 39:30-31.
[53]That is, in death, burial and body-decomposition.
[54]Qur'an 20:55.
[55]Qur'an 71:17-18.
[56]Qur'an 53:31.
[57]Qur'an 64:7.

there may remain no valid opposition to Allah's imperative."[58]

The first prophet was Nūḥ (Noah)—*'Alayhi al salām*!—and the last was Muḥammad—*Ṣallā Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam*—the seal of the prophets. Evidence for this is in the verse, "We have revealed to you as We did to Nūḥ and to the prophets after him."[59] "Unto every people, Allah has sent a prophet who called them to worship Him alone, and to forbid them to serve *al ṭāghūt* [false gods]."[60] Allah has indeed commanded men to deny the false gods, as He commanded them to have faith in Him. Ibn al Qayyim—May Allah show him mercy—said: "The meaning of '*al ṭāghūt*' is everything to which man commits higher loyalty, service or obedience than is due. There are many such beings or objects, but principal among them are five: Satan, the accursed of Allah; whoever agrees to be worshipped or calls men to worship him; whoever claims to share Allah's transcendental knowledge (*'ilm al ghayb*); whoever judges by any law other than what Allah has revealed." The evidence therefor is in the verse: "No coercion in religion. Truth is manifest from error. Whoever denies the false gods and believes in Allah alone has secured himself with the surest bond which never fails. Allah is all-hearing, all-knowing."[61]

This, in short, is the meaning of the witness "There is no god but Allah." As the *ḥadīth* has reported: "The head of the matter is *Islām*; its pillar is *ṣalāt*, and its pinnacle is *jihād* in the cause of Allah." But Allah knows best.

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[58]Qur'an 4:165.
[59]Qur'an 4:163.
[60]Qur'an 16:36.
[61]Qur'an 2:256.

ESSAY II

FOUR BASIC RULES

Allah, the Almighty, Lord of the glorious throne, I pray that He may guide you in this world and the next; that He may always bless you; that He may make you one of those who recognize His bounty, who remain firm in face of adversity, and who repent and seek His forgiveness if they disobey or sin. These three characteristics are the indices of felicity and blessedness.

Know—May Allah guide you to His obedience—that ḥanīfism, the religion of Ibrahīm, consists of worshipping Allah alone, of dedicating yourself sincerely to serving Him. He said: "I have not created jinn and men but to worship Me."[62] Once you know that Allah has created you to serve Him, you will realize that there can be no service except with *tawḥīd*. Just as there is no *ṣalāt* without purity, and there is no purity with uncleanliness, so there is no worship of Allah with *shirk* [or associationism]. With *shirk*, man's worship is spoilt, his deed is vain and he is doomed to eternal hellfire. If you are cognizant of all this, you will realize that your most important care should be to have all the knowledge pertinent thereto, that Allah may save you from *shirk's* terrible abyss. Allah said: "Allah will not forgive any association of aught with Him; but He will forgive any lesser offence to whomsoever He chooses."[63] Such pertinent knowledge consists of four basic rules, elaborated in Allah's holy Book.

First Rule

The first rule is the knowledge that the unbelievers whom the Prophet—*Ṣallā Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam*—had fought, did acknowledge that Allah—May He be glorified—is indeed the Creator, Provider and Maker of this world. However, this did not make them Muslims. Evidence therefor is in the verse, "Ask them, 'Who sends down for you your provision from the sky and grows it out of the earth? Who hears your prayer and sees your condition? Who brings the living out of the dead and the dead out of the living? Who directs the course of the world?' They will answer, 'Allah?' Rejoin: 'Would you then not fulfill your duty to Him?' "[64]

Second Rule

The second rule is to know that the unbelievers claim that they do not pray to the gods and call on them except to the end that they may intercede on their behalf with Allah, as the verse said: "Those who took

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[62]Qur'an 51:56.

[63]Qur'an 4:47, 115.

[64]Qur'an 10:32.

caused me to die, You took over the witnessing on them as well as on all else. If You punish them, they are Your creatures; and if You forgive them, You are the Mighty, the Wise."[72] "Those unto whom they pray [*i.e.*, the saints] themselves seek avenue to their Lord's mercy, compete in coming close to Allah, and fear His punishment. Punishment of your Lord is certainly to be shunned."[73] "Have you considered al Lāt, al 'Uzzā and the third one Manāt? Are yours the males and His the females? Is this not ridiculous? All of them are but names which you have named, following the example of your ancestors. Allah gave no voucher for them. You follow but a guess and your own desires."[74] Another evidence that trees and rock-idols were worshipped is the report of Abū Wāqid al Laythī—May Allah show him mercy! He said: "We made a sortie with the Prophet—*Ṣallā Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam*— to Ḥunayn, shortly after our conversion to Islām. The people of Hunayn had a tree called Dhāt Anwāṭ, which they revered and on which they hung their arms. When we passed by a tree of the same kind, we asked the Prophet to proclaim that tree as ours for the same purpose."

Fourth Rule

The associationists of our own day are worse and hence more guilty than those of pre-Islāmic times. For, the ancient ones used to commit *shirk* in prosperity and return to genuine faith in adversity, whereas the present day associationists are constant in their unbelief, regardless of prosperity or adversity. Evidence for this is in the verse: "And when they ride in barks [in stormy seas] they address their prayers to Allah in complete sincerity, but relapse into *shirk* when they reach the shore."[75]

Wa ṣallā Allahu 'ala Sayyidinā Muḥammad wa 'alā ālihi wa ṣahbihi wa sallam.

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[72]Qur'an 5:116-118.
[73]Qur'an 17:57.
[74]Qur'an 53:19-23.
[75]Qur'an 29:65.

EPISTLE III
CLARIFICATION OF MISUNDERSTANDINGS
(*Kashf al Shubuhat*)

Know—May Allah show you mercy—that *tawhid* is the singling out of Allah for worship and service. It is the religion of the prophets sent by Allah to mankind. The first of the prophets was Nūḥ—*'Alayhi al salām*—whom Allah had sent to his people when they exaggerated their esteem for the saints, Wadd, Suwā', Yaghūth, Ya'ūq and Nasr, and raised them into gods. The last is Muhammad—*Ṣallā Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam*—who destroyed the idols which stood for these deified persons.

It was to a religious people who worshipped regularly, performed the pilgrimage, gave in charity and remembered Allah constantly that He sent His Prophet Muḥammad. Their mistake was one of assigning to some creatures an intermediary role between them and Allah in the hope of realizing closeness to Allah and His pleasure through their intercession. They compared them to the angels who keep Allah constant company, to Jesus and Mary, and many other saints. For this reason, Allah sent Muḥammad—*Ṣallā Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam*—to revive for them the religion of their ancestor Ibrahim, and to teach them anew that such pietism and devotion as they showed for the saints belonged exclusively to Allah, never to any favorite angel, prophet or any creature. For it must be borne in mind that these associationists did witness that Allah is indeed alone the Creator, without partners in the act of creation, that He alone was the Provider, that He alone was the Giver of life and death, Ruler of the universe; and finally, that heaven and earth and all the creatures in them are under His command and at His disposal.

The evidence that those who were fought by the Prophet of Allah—*Ṣallā Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam*—subscribed to the religious views we mentioned is in the Qur'an. Allah said: "Ask them, O Muḥammad, 'Who sends down for you your provision from the sky and Who grows it out from the earth? Who hears your prayer and sees your condition? Who brings the living out of dead, and the dead of the living? Who directs the course of the world?' They will answer, 'Allah.' Rejoin: 'Would you then not fulfill your duty to Him?' "[76] "Ask them, O Muḥammad, 'Who is Master of the seven heavens, Lord of the glorious throne?' They answer, 'Allah.' Rejoin: 'Would you then not keep your duty to Him?' Ask them again, 'In Whose hand is dominion over all things? Who is it that assists people and is never assisted by anyone else?

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[76]Qur'an 10:31.

Who, as you claim, has knowledge?' They will answer: 'Allah' Rejoin: 'How then are you beguiled?' "[77]

The associationists' acquiescence in all this was not sufficient to enter them into the ranks of *tawḥīd* to which the Prophet—*Ṣallā Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam*—had called them. If therefore you have convinced yourself of this fact, you would know that the *tawḥīd* which was turned down by these ancients is itself the *tawḥīd* which holds Allah as sole object of worship, what is called in modern parlance "the monotheistic creed." For they did pray to Allah day and night, but also prayed to the angels to intercede on their behalf, thinking that the angels carry weight with Allah for their righteousness and closeness to Him. They also prayed to the righteous humans, such as al Lat, or to a prophet such as Jesus.

You would then know, equally, that the Prophet—*Ṣallā Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam*—fought them precisely on account of this *shirk* or associationism, and invited them to exclude all but Allah from their worship and devotion, following the divine commandment: "Therefore, do not worship, pay homage or pray to anyone beside Allah."[78] Allah said: "To Him alone are worship and prayer legitimate. Those who address themselves in religious worship or prayer to other beings will never receive satisfaction."[79] The Prophet had fought them to no purpose but to make worship, sacrifice, supplication and every religious devotion be directed to Allah alone.

You have therefore become convinced that their profession of the faith that only Allah is God did not entitle them to enter Islām; that their invocation of angels, prophets and saints for intercession with Allah and winning of His favor has, on the contrary, rightly rendered them outlaws in the eyes of Islām.

Such is the *tawḥīd* to which the prophets of Allah have called men, and which the associationists rejected. It alone is what is meant by the statement "There is no God but Allah," because only He may legitimately be approached in any religious devotion, not the king, prophet, saint, holy tree, holy grave or jinn.

The ancients did not regard Allah in the fashion of *tawḥīd*, where He alone would be Creator, Provider, Forgiver and Ruler. They meant by the term 'God' what modern associationists understand by the term 'lord' or 'master.' That is why the Prophet — *Sallā Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam*—came to call them to the genuine meaning of *tawḥīd*, not to the literal meaning current among them which was already on the lips of the associationists and other ignorant people. All of these knew at once

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[77]Qur'an 23:86-89.
[78]Qur'an 72:18.
[79]Qur'an 13:15.

what the Prophet intended, namely, restriction of all attachment to Allah alone, of all dependence upon him exclusively, of denial of all other beings beside Him and avoidance of them. For when He commanded them: "Say, No God is God but Allah," they answered, "Did He make all the gods into One? That is certainly something astounding!"[80]

When it is kept in mind that the unbelievers knew all this only too well, is it not very strange indeed for a person to claim he is a Muslim while not knowing as much of his religion as the unbelievers of Makkah knew; while he pays lip service to the letter of the confession of faith without believing anything of its meaning, without committing himself thereto. The precocious among such moderns believe that *tawḥīd* means merely the belief that Allah is the sole Creator, Provider and Ruler. Are not the plebeians among the unbelievers more knowledgeable, and hence worthier, than him?

If all this is perfectly clear to you, and you have come to know with certainty the nature of unbelief of which Allah said: "Allah will not forgive man's association of aught with Him; but He will forgive anything lesser than this offence to whomsoever He chooses,"[81] and you have known for sure the nature of the religion which Allah sent all the prophets to teach, the religion for which He accepts no substitute; you would realize the abyss of ignorance to which most people have sunk. This knowledge brings you two advantages.

First, the felicity of true guidance by Allah and the joy of receiving His blessing as the verse said: "Say, it is with Allah's bounty and blessing [that I am rightly guided]. For such felicity it is legitimate to rejoice. For such felicity is worthier than all that they gather."[82] The second advantage is that such knowledge generates in you the great fear of Allah. For knowing that one could lapse into unbelief by a loose word he may pronounce, even in ignorance—you would be most careful not to let your tongue slip. Ignorance in this provides no excuse. You would equally take utmost care not to fall into damnation, and hence not permit yourself to say what compromises *tawḥīd* while thinking that it may be drawing yourself closer to Allah, as the associationists did. Remember what Allah has related to us about the people of Mūsā (Moses). Despite their knowledge and righteousness, they came to him pleading: "Make to us a god even as they have gods."[83]

Know that in His wisdom, Allah has not sent a prophet but set up for him opponents. He said: "And thus, We have caused every prophet to

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[80]Qur'an 38:5.
[81]Qur'an 4:47, 115.
[82]Qur'an 10:58.
[83]Qur'an 7:137.

be opposed by enemies, human and jinn devils, who inspire one another through guile and spread falsehood."[84] Hence, the enemies of *tawḥīd* possess many a science, many books and arguments, as Allah said of them: "When apostles came to them with certain knowledge and evidence, they exulted in the knowledge they had gathered."[85]

If the path to Allah, as you must by now have come to know, is necessarily hampered by enemies endowed with eloquence, science and argument, it becomes your duty to provide yourself with such learning about Allah's religion as you may use to ward off the temptations of these devils whose chieftain and general said to your Lord—May He be glorified: "I shall straddle myself across the straight path leading to You and lie in wait. I shall pounce on them from their front and back, their right and left."[86] But if you come to Allah's side, listen to His arguments and proofs, then you have no cause to fear. "Satan's strategy is forever weak."[87] The common man who belongs to *tawḥīd* will overcome a thousand men of knowledge of the associationist camp, just as Allah has said: "It is Our soldiers who will have victory."[88] The soldiers of Allah will conquer with logic and sound argument, as they do with sword and spear. The fear is for that adherent of *tawḥīd* who follows the path devoid of defensive arms, while Allah has favored him with the benefit of His Book which He made "a clarification for every point, guidance, mercy and happy tidings for the Muslims."[89] No one comes with a false argument in this matter but the Qur'ān contains its clear refutation. Allah said: "They will not bring to you a parable but We shall bring you the truth and the better explanation of it."[90] Some exegetes held this verse to be generally valid, *i.e.*, applicable to every false argument forever.

I shall report to you in the sequel some of the arguments of Allah's Book in answer to the allegations of associationists in our day and age. Their false arguments could be answered in two ways: one general, and the other specific. The former involves the great fact about the revelation which brings great advantage to whoever understands it. That is, "It is Allah Who revealed to you the Book, wherein are clear verses—the substance of the Book—and others allegorical. Those whose hearts are doubtful pursue that which is allegorical, seeking interpretation and dissension."[91] The Prophet—*Ṣallā Allahu 'alayhi wa*

[84]Qur'an 6:112.
[85]Qur'an 40:83.
[86]Qur'an 7:15-16.
[87]Qur'an 4:75.
[88]Qur'an 37:173.
[89]Qur'an 16:89.
[90]Qur'an 25:33.
[91]Qur'an 3:7.

acknowledged the creatorship of Allah: "The idol-worshippers too claimed to call on the saints, idols and the righteous of whom Allah said: 'Those unto whom they pray [*i.e.*, the saints] themselves seek avenue to their Lord's mercy, compete in coming closer to Allah and fear His punishment.' "[95] The unbelievers also pray to Jesus, and his mother Mary, but Allah said: "'Īsā, son of Maryam, is only a Prophet, like so many others that came and passed before him. His mother was a saintly woman. Both of them ate food like all humans do. See how We make the revelations clear for them, and see how they turn away!"[96] Recite to him the verses: "The day when We shall assemble them all and ask the angels, 'Are these the persons who used to worship you?' On that day they will answer: 'Praised be Allah! He is our Lord, not they. But before then, most of them would even worship the jinn;"[97] "And when Allah asked 'Īsā, son of Maryam, 'O 'Īsā! Did you ask the people to take you and your mother as gods beside Allah,' he answered: 'Praised be Allah! How can I claim what is not mine to claim?' "[98] Answer him therefore that Allah had declared unbelievers those who prayed to the idols as well as to the righteous, that the Prophet—*Ṣallā Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam*—has fought them.

He may object that in fighting them, the Prophet sought only the unbelievers among them. He may even say: "I witness that Allah is the source of our good and ill, the Ruler of the universe Whom alone I solicit; that the righteous predecessors are powerless; that I appeal to them merely to intercede with Allah on my behalf." The answer is that he and the unbelievers stand on a par. Recite to him the verses, "As to those beings other than Allah whom we have taken as friends, we do not worship them except that they may draw us closer to Him;"[99] "Those are only our intercessors with Allah."[100]

Know that these three false counter-arguments are the most conclusive. All of them have been anticipated by Allah in His Book. If you understand them well, the rest is easily refutable.

If the associationist objects: "I do not worship aught but Allah. My recourse to the righteous and my soliciting of them is not worship," then answer, "You admit that Allah has commanded you to worship Him alone, that this is your duty to Him. What then is this exclusive worship of Allah which is your duty to Him?" For apparently this man knows neither the nature of worship nor its various forms. Explain it to him.

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[95]Qur'an 17:57.
[96]Qur'an 5:78.
[97]Qur'an 34:41.
[98]Qur'an 5:119.
[99]Qur'an 39:3.
[100]Qur'an 10:18.

Tell him that Allah said: "Pray to Allah humbly and in secret."[101] If he concedes that that is an imposition of worship, for prayer is the heart of worship, then give him the rest of the argument. If it is granted that calling upon somebody in day or night, out of fear or in solicitation, is worship, and you have called upon a prophet or other to fulfill your need, wouldn't that be an instance of worship? Likewise, if you acted in accordance with a commandment of Allah, "Pray unto Allah and sacrifice unto Him,"[102] wouldn't your action be worship? This cannot be denied. Reason then with him that if he were to sacrifice to a prophet, a jinn or any other creature, that would be a worship addressed to other than Allah, and hence, *shirk*. This conclusion is unavoidable.

Tell him, in addition, that the unbelievers whom the revelation of the Qur'ān addressed worshipped the angels, the righteous, al Lat and other beings. They worshipped their gods by praying, sacrificing and recoursing to them, while at the same time these gods acknowledged themselves as creatures of Allah standing under His dominion. The associationists recognized Allah as sole Ruler, but they recoursed to other beings for intercession on account of their favor with Allah.

Another objection is that genuine *tawḥīd* denies the intercession of the Prophet—*Ṣallā Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam*. The answer to it is that, on the contrary, we do not deny it at all. The Prophet—*Ṣallā Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam*—is indeed the appointed intercessionary. But intercession is all to Allah, as He Himself has revealed: "Say, O Muḥammad, all intercession belongs to Allah."[103] It can not be entered into by anyone without His permission, just as He said, "No one may intercede with Him without His permission."[104] Surely the Prophet would not intercede on behalf of anyone without permission. Allah Himself said: "They will not intercede but for those with whom Allah is pleased."[105] We do know that He will not be pleased except with *tawḥīd*, since it was He Who revealed: "Whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will not be accepted from him."[106] If, therefore, intercession all belongs to Allah, that it cannot take place except by His leave, and that He will not permit it except on behalf of the adherents of *tawḥīd*, it follows that intercession belongs to Him and must be solicited directly from Him. Our prayer therefore should be: "O Allah, do not deprive us of Muḥammad's intercession. O Allah, permit him to intercede on our behalf," etc.

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[101]Qur'an 7:54.
[102]Qur'an 108:2.
[103]Qur'an 39:44.
[104]Qur'an 2:55.
[105]Qur'an 21:28.
[106]Qur'an 3:85.

In case it is objected that the Prophet—*Ṣallā Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam*—has been granted the power to intercede, and that it may therefore be asked of him to do what he had already been given the privilege to do, the answer is that, whereas Allah did grant him that privilege, He commanded you not to ask it of him. Allah said: "Do not call unto anyone beside Him."[107] Intercession has equally been granted to other beings beside the Prophet—*Ṣallā Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam*—namely, to the angels, the leaders and saints. Would you then say the same of them, that Allah has granted them the power to intercede and that you may ask them therefor? If you do, you have relapsed back to your original situation described by Allah in His Book. If you do not, then your claim that you may ask the Prophet for his intercession because he was given that privilege is false.

If it is objected that one does not at all associate anything with Allah, and that recourse to the righteous is not associationism, then give the following answer: "You realize that Allah has forbidden *shirk* more strongly than He forbade adultery, that He will not forgive this offence. He cannot plead ignorance of the nature of that which Allah has so emphatically forbidden. Allah could not forbid us that which He did not clarify."

There is another objection. That is the claim that *shirk* is itself idol-worship, whereas none of us nowadays worship idols. This is answered by pointing to the meaning of idol-worship. Everyone knows that the associationists of pre-Islām did not believe that the wooden and stone idols created, provided, ruled or responded to their worshipper. Such is belied by the Qur'ān itself: "Ask them, O Muḥammad, who sends down for you your provision from the sky and who grows it out from the earth?"[108]

If, moreover, the objector holds that *shirk* is to visit the wooden or stone idol, shrine or other holy object, to sacrifice and call unto it in the hope that it will bring him closer to Allah and protect him from evil with its grace, then tell him that that is precisely what the associationists of today do. He would then admit that associationism is idol-worship. But so is recourse to the righteous, any calling upon them. This is proven by Allah's treating as unbelief any devotion addressed to the angels, to Jesus and the righteous ancestors.

The crux of the matter is, of course, his denial of associationism. You must ask him to define it. If he defines it as idol-worship, press him for further clarification. He must present an explanation of what he means by 'I worship naught but Allah,' and you should press him for it until he defines worship in Qur'ānic terms. Again, he cannot plead ignorance,

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[107]Qur'an 72:18.

[108]Qur'an 10:31.

for he does make a claim. If he defines the relevant terms differently, then inform him of their definitions as they came in the clear verses revealed by Allah. Tell him that what the modern associationists do is identically the same as that done by their ancestors. What is objected to in our restriction of worship and devotion to Allah is the same as was opposed to the Prophet, namely, "Did he make all gods into One? That is certainly something astounding!"[109]

In fact, what the modern associationists call the monotheistic creed is the same associationism which the Qur'ān has come to refute, and which the Prophet has fought. The aberration of antiquity is even a lighter offence than that of modern times. First, the ancients did not call upon the angels, the saints and the idols except in prosperity. Whenever they were in distress, they sincerely worshipped Allah alone. Allah said of them, "In adversity on the high seas, all those to whom you pray will fail you, not Allah. When He brings you safely to shore, you turn away. Man is ever thankless."[110] "Say: Would you, if punishment from Allah were to befall you, or the last hour were to seize you, call to any being other than Allah for help? No! But unto Him alone will you call if you are truthful. He will expose what you have prayed to and you will forget the partners you ascribed to Him."[111] "And when adversity strikes man, he turns to his Lord in prayer and repentance."[112] "Say, you may enjoy your unbelief for a short while. But you are doomed to the Fire."[113] "And if the waves of the sea cover them like awnings, then do they call on Allah, dedicating all their devotion to Him."[114]

Whoever understands this problem clearly will realize the difference which separates the modern associationists from their older predecessors. The former, who were fought by the Prophet—*Ṣallā Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam*—called unto Allah and other beings in prosperity only; but in time of distress they called upon Allah alone, declared He had no partners, and forsook their previous lords.

The second point is that whereas the ancients have called unto other beings beside Allah—namely prophets, saints, angels, and other beings close to Him, trees and rocks which conform to His divine pattern and never disobey for, the associationists of our times do so to some of the most corrupt people. Their so-called "patrons" are precisely those about whom they report all kinds of sins, adultery, theft, neglect of *ṣalāt* and other crimes. To believe in that which is incapable of disobedience, like

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[109]Qur'an 38:5.
[110]Qur'an 17:67.
[111]Qur'an 6:41.
[112]Qur'an 39:8.
[113]*Ibid.*
[114]Qur'an 31:32.

wood and stone, is better than to do so in beings whose corruption and immorality are for everyone to witness. We may hence conclude that those associationists whom the Prophet—*Ṣallā Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam*—fought in his days were more rational and their crime lighter than that of the modern ones.

The moderns have another defence, no less fallacious than what we have already seen, but far more beguiling and misleading. They hold that the unbelieving contemporaries of the Prophet against whom the Qur'ān launched its arguments did not witness that there is no God but Allah, unlike themselves who do. The ancients belied the Prophet and charged him with witchcraft, denied the resurrection of the body and the Qur'ānic revelation. Hence, they were radically different from the modern associationists who witness that there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is the Prophet of Allah; who accept the Qur'ān as true, believe in the resurrection, hold the *ṣalāt* and observe the fast. How then, runs their argument, can the two be comparable to each other?

The answer is that the 'ulamā' [Muslim men of knowledge] universally agree that to believe the Prophet of Allah—*Ṣallā Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam*—in part of his revelation, and to belie him in the other part, is to commit unbelief, to stand outside the pale of Islām. Such is the case of the person who accepts *tawhid* but denies the obligation to hold *ṣalāt*, or accepts both these and denies the *zakāt*, or the fasting, or the pilgrimage. It was for the benefit of those who accepted everything that was revealed to the Prophet before, but refused to be led by him to the pilgrimage that the verse was revealed: "And to Allah is due from mankind the observance of pilgrimage to the House by everyone capable of it. Whoever disbelieves must know that Allah stands in no need of men."[115] The *'ulamā'* are agreed that whoever accepts all this but denies the resurrection of the body has committed unbelief and rendered himself liable to capital punishment and his property to confiscation. Allah said: "Those who disbelieve in Allah and His prophets, who discriminate between them, who believe in some and disbelieve in others, seeking a way in between, are the real unbelievers. To them We have prepared a humiliating punishment."[116] Since Allah Himself has so clearly condemned the person who believes in part of the revelation and disbelieves in the other part, their defence falls to the ground. Such was the defence of those who wrote to us from al Aḥsa'.

It is also possible to argue the case from another angle. We have seen that where there is belief in everything the Prophet had brought from Allah but disbelief in the *ṣalāt*, the consequence is *kufr* (unbelief), deserving of capital punishment. Likewise, when one accepts everything

[115]Qur'an 3:97.
[116]Qur'an 4:149.

in the revelation as true except the resurrection of the body, or the fasting of Ramadān. The juristic schools do not disagree on this matter, and we have seen that the Qur'ān itself gives the same judgment. It is known that *tawḥīd* is the most important task the Prophet—*Ṣallā Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam*—brought to us, more important than *ṣalāt*, *zakāt*, fasting or pilgrimage. Certainly, to compromise *tawḥīd* is to commit unbelief, even if such compromising is accompanied by the strictest observance of all other duties imposed by the Prophet. Otherwise, unbelief would have been predicated of him who rejects the lesser but not of him who rejects the greater part, which is absurd.

The companions of the Prophet—*Ṣallā Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam*—fought Banū Ḥanīfah despite the fact that that tribe adopted Islām immediately from the Prophet, witnessed that there is no God but Allah, that Muḥammad is the Prophet of Allah, recited the *adhān* (call to *ṣalāt*) and held the *salat*. If it is objected that they also held Musaylimah to be a prophet, we argue: If raising a man to the position of prophet is committing unbelief and deserving capital punishment, raising Shamsān, Yūsuf, a companion of the Prophet, or a prophet, to the position of the Almighty of Heaven and Earth must be so *a fortiori*. Can they be so ignorant? "So Allah seals the hearts of the ignorant."[117]

Those whom 'Alī ibn Abū Talib had destroyed by fire were all pretenders of Islam. They were 'Alī's own companions and have been taught by no less than the companions of the Prophet. But they exaggerated their faith in 'Alī just as others had done with Yūsuf, Shamsān and others. How then did the Prophet's companions unanimously agree to destroy them? Did they do so in vain? Or is belief in Tāj and his like a lesser crime than belief in 'Alī ibn Abū Ṭālib?

The same is true of Banu 'Ubayd al Qaddah which ruled the Maghrib and Egypt during the 'Abbāsī period. All of them witnessed that there is no God but Allah and that Muḥammad is the Prophet of Allah. They called themselves Muslims, observed the congregational prayer and held the Friday *ṣalāt*. When they diverted from the *sharī'āh* in matters much less important than these, the 'ulamā' unanimously resolved to declare them heretics and to fight them. The *'ulamā'* called the provinces the heretics ruled "Land of War," fought them successfully, and rescued those provinces and peoples from their dominion.

If it is objected that these ancients were not guilty of unbelief on that account alone, but because they have combined associationism with belying the Prophet and the Qur'ān, denying the resurrection of the body or another part of the faith, why then did the *'ulamā'* assign a chapter in the *sharī'ah* for heresy, the act of unbelief by the Muslim? The *'ulamā'* took pains to mention in this part of the *sharī'ah* many varieties of

[117]Qur'an 30:59.

heresies, all of which deserved its subject capital punishment and confiscation of his property. They even ascribed it to much lesser acts of disbelief, sueh as a word spoken verbally but not meant, a word spoken in jest.

Those of whom Allah said: "They swear by Allah that they did not say the word of unbelief; but they did say it after their entry into Islām,"[118] were declared heretics by Allah despite the fact that they were contemporaries of the Prophet, praying with him, observing the *zakāt*, the pilgrimage, *tawḥid*, and fighting on his side. Likewise was the case of those of whom the Qur'ān said: "And if you ask them to justify their claim, O Muḥammad, they will say: 'We did but talk in jest.' Then say, 'Was it at Allah, His signs and His Prophet that you scoffed? Make no excuse. You have disbelieved after your confession of faith.' "[119] Allah has called them disbelievers after their confession of faith in front of the Prophet—*Ṣallā Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam*—during the campaign of Tabūk. Their crime was a word of ridicule they claimed they said as a piece of jest. Consider if these were to object, like our contemporaries: Do you declare heretic Muslims who witness that there is no God but Allah, who hold the *ṣalāt* and fast? Consider also the answer Allah has given them!

Another evidence is what Allah reported to us of Banū Isrā'īl. Despite their piety and righteousness at that time, they asked Mūsā (Moses), "Let us have a god, even as they have gods!"[120] just as some companions of the Prophet asked him, "Let us too have a tree like Dhāt Anwāṭ." The Prophet—*Ṣallā Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam*—swore that the two requests were of the same nature.

Faced with these annals of Islāmic history, the modern associationists argue that neither Banū Isrā'īl nor the Prophet's companions in question had actually achieved their requests, another god in one case, another Dhāt Anwāt in the second. Hence they did not actually commit unbelief. It is certainly true that neither of them got what they wanted; that, had they obtained what they sought, their unbelief would have been confirmed in the deed. These anecdotes teach us that the Muslim, even if he were steeped in knowledge, might well fall into *shirk* inadvertantly. They have the merit of reminding us not to take *tawḥid* simplistically. Self-conceit in such matters constitutes great ignorance and greater temptation. Should the Muslim pronounce words compromising to *tawḥid*, he should be so told; and he should repent and withdraw his words, just as the Prophet's companions did.

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[118]Qur'an 9:75.
[119]Qur'an 9:66-67.
[120]Qur'an 7:137.

Just so, however, he has deserved some chastening as the Prophet did to his companions.

The associationists of today present yet another argument. The Prophet, they argue, condemned Usamah's killing of the man who professed "There is no God but Allah," and told Usamah, "I have been commanded by Allah to fight men until they witness that there is no God but Allah." Other *ḥadīths* to this effect are also mentioned by these ignorant people, to the end of proving that whoever so witnesses does not commit unbelief no matter what else he does. We must inform them that the Prophet—*Ṣallā Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam*—fought the Jews and made bondsmen out of them despite the fact that they witnessed that there is no God but Allah; that the Prophet's companions fought Banū Ḥanīfah while they too subscribed to this as well as to the fact that Muḥammad is the Prophet of Allah, called themselves Muslims and observed the *ṣalāt*. The same is true of those whom 'Ali ibn Abū Ṭālib consigned to the flames. And yet, these people argue, all the more inconsequently, that whoever denies the resurrection commits unbelief and deserves capital punishment, even if he held that there is no God but Allah. They hold the same to be true of the person who denies any of the pillars of Islām. But how could the change apply to these lesser cases and not to the deniers of *tawḥīd* itself, the head and crux of all religion? How ignorant are the enemies of Allah of the meanings of the *ḥadīths* they quote!

As to the tradition of Usāmah itself, how he killed a person who pretended to enter Islam in order to save his neck at the very last moment, the moral it teaches is that we must stop execution if the person shows entry into Islam, in order to ascertain whether his entry is genuine or fake. In this regard, Allah said: "O men who believe! Whenever you set out in the path of Allah, investigate the evidence and make absolutely sure before you act."[121] Execution must therefore be stopped, not absolutely, but for a purpose; namely, to carry out the investigation and make sure. If the evidence is against the accused, one may—indeed should—proceed with the execution. Otherwise, the divine command to investigate and make sure becomes itself meaningless.

The fact that the Prophet asked Usāmah: "Did you kill him after he said 'There is no God but Allah?' I am commanded to fight men until they witness that there is no God but Allah," constitutes evidence against their claim when we remember that it was the Prophet himelf who said of the Khawarij (schismatics): "Kill them wherever you find them. If I ever seize them, I will kill them like the people of 'Ād." Everyone knows that the Khawārij were the most pious of all, the most devoted. The Prophet's companions acknowledged the Khawārij's

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[121]Qur'an 4:93.

superiority to themselves in such matters, even though the Khawārij were their students in Islām. But none of these deserving qualifications helped them when they followed a course other than the *sharī'ah.*

The same is true of the Prophet's fighting of the Jews, of his companions' fighting of Banū Ḥanīfah, of his intention to fight Banū al Musṭaliq when he received report that they had withheld the *zakāt.* It was on that occasion that the verse "O Men who believe, if an immoral man presents you with a report, investigate the evidence and make absolutely sure before you act."[122] All this proves the meaning we assigned to these *ḥadīths.*

Another claim is that the Prophet said that on the Day of Judgment, the people will ask Ādam to intercede on their behalf, then Nūḥ, Ibrahim, Mūsā, and 'Īsā. All of them will refuse until the people come to Muhammad. This *ḥadīth*, the claim holds, proves that asking intercession from beings other than Allah does not constitute unbelief. This claim is far from right. To ask any person to intercede on behalf of anyone in that wherein he is capable of interceding is not in question here. Allah has said of Mūsā, "He asked that his fellow countrymen intercede for him against his enemy,"[123] just as man may ask same of his friends in case of need regarding things which fall within their power. What is denied here and condemned is not this kind of intercession, but that which is asked for at the graves of the saints, or outside, in matters which fall only under the jurisdiction of Allah. To ask the prophets on the Day of Judgment to ask Allah—and that is all that the *ḥadīth* claims—is perfectly legitimate. There is nothing wrong in asking for this in order to bring the people who earned Paradise to their just reward and in getting the final judgment executed. There is nothing wrong in any man's visiting another and asking him to pray to Allah on the former's behalf. The Prophet's companions asked likewise during his lifetime; but none of them ever entertained the idea of asking for this at his grave. Our predecessors condemned such requests when they were made by anyone at the Prophet's grave. The requests made to the ordinary dead man must then be condemnable *a fortiori.*

Another argument is claimed by the modern associationists, namely, that when Ibrahīm was cast into the fire, Angel Jibrīl appeared to him and asked him if he needed anything. Ibrahim answered: "I have no need of you." From this they conclude that if intercession amounted to unbelief, Jibrīl would not have offered it to Ibrahīm.

The answer is simple. Jibrīl offered to intercede for Ibrahim in that of which he was capable. Allah has described Jibrīl as possessed "of

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[122]Qur'an 49:6.

[123]Qur'an 28:15.

tremendous strength."[124] Had he been permitted by Allah to pull him from the fire, to take away the fire to the ends of the earth, or to raise Ibrahim to heaven, he would have certainly been capable of doing so. The case is like that of the poor man who is visited by the rich. The latter offers to help him with money and all that money can buy, but the poor man rejects the offer, preferring to suffer in patience until Allah provides for him. This has nothing to do with intercession as a form of worship and unbelief.

Let us conclude with another important problem about which much has been said before. There is no disagreement that *tawhid* must take place in the heart, in the mouth, and in the arm. If it is deficient in any of these areas, there is no Islam. Whoever knows the principles of *tawhid* and does not act on them is an unbeliever, on a par with Pharaoh and Iblis (Satan) or their likes. Such people claim that *tawhid* is true, that they understand and hold it as such, but that they are incapable of pursuing it in deed. Others hold that their people will not permit them to differ from established practice, or they give other excuses. They forget that even the great men of unbelief have known the truth and have not left it without implementation except for some excuse. Allah has said of them, "They exchanged My signs for a mean price."[125] "They know the truth as well as they know their own offspring."[126] On the other hand, if implementation was made without understanding, without sincere commitment, that would by hypocrisy, a more evil crime than unbelief. Allah said of it: "Those who are guilty of insincerity and pretence take their seats in the bottom of hell."[127]

The question of insincere pretence is a long one. To study it in the careers of men yields the conviction that truth is never forsaken but for a cause, such as advantage, personal glory and fame. Allah said to the insincere: "Make no excuse! You have committed unbelief after your confession of faith."[128] Some companions of the Prophet were declared unbelievers because of a word they said in jest. The former kind is the more grave. In another verse, Allah said: "Whoever disbelieves in Allah after his confession of faith and does so, not because of coercion where his heart continues firmly as before, but deliberately, has merited Allah's anger and dire punishment. Such people have preferred the advantage of this world to that of the next."[129] Only the coerced are excused. All the others are condemned, whether they commit their

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[124]Qur'an 53:5.
[125]Qur'an 9:10.
[126]Qur'an 2:146.
[127]Qur'an 4:144.
[128]Qur'an 9:67.
[129]Qur'an 16:106.

unbelief out of fear, distress, loyalty to others, love of money, or out of jest.

The verse is clear in its exception of the person under coercion. It is obvious that man may be coerced either to say or to do, but not to believe. That is why the verse qualified the one who yields under coercion but whose heart remains firm in faith. The second point to note is the verse's explanation: "For they have preferred the advantage of this world to that of the next."[130] Thus, Allah established that unbelief and its consequent punishment are not caused by belief, ignorance, hatred for religion and love for unbelief, but rather, to obtain advantage in this world. They are brought about by preference of such advantage over the religion, over Allah Himself—May He be praised and glorified.

Wa ṣallā Allahu 'alā Muḥammad wa 'alā ālihi wa ṣaḥbihi wa sallam.

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[130] *Ibid.*